

REMARKS

Claims 1-14 and 16-19 are pending in this application. By this amendment, claims 1, 5, 9, 13 and 16-19 are amended and claim 15 is cancelled. No new matter is added.

Applicant appreciates the courtesies shown to Applicant's representative by Examiner Vilakazi in the November 20, 2008 personal interview. Applicant's separate record of the substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

Claims 1-3, 5-7, 9-11, 13 and 16-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Shomura, U.S. Patent No. 6,170,465, in view of Ishikawa et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,975,934, and Mashiki, U.S. Patent No. 6,176,220. The features of canceled claim 15 have been incorporated into independent claims 1, 5, 9, 13 and 16-19, rendering the rejection moot.

Claims 4, 8 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Shomura in view of Ishikawa, Mashiki and Maloney, U.S. Patent No. 6,481,273. As discussed above, independent claims 1, 5 and 9 have been amended to include the features of canceled claim 15, rendering the rejection moot.

Claim 14 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Shomura in view of Ishikawa, Mashiki, Maloney and Yomogida, U.S. Patent No. 6,513,496. As discussed above, claim 1 has been amended to include the features of cancelled claim 15, rendering the rejection moot.

Claim 15 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Shomura in view of Ishikawa, Mashiki, Maloney and Iwano et al., U.S. Patent No. 6, 155,230. The features of claim 15 have been incorporated into independent claims 1, 5, 9, 13 and 16-19. The rejection is respectfully traversed with respect to these claims.

Claims 1, 5, 9, 13 and 16-19 call for a conversion means/unit for converting the intake air amount variations among the cylinders to intake valve operating angle variations among the cylinders to intake valve operating angle variations among the cylinders and/or intake valve lift amount variations among the cylinders.

The Office Action alleges that these features are disclosed in Iwano at col. 1, lines 43-50. As agreed during the personal interview, Iwano discloses a throttle valve angle, which one of ordinary skill in the art would not interpret as disclosing an intake valve operating angle as called for in the independent claims. Further, as agreed during the personal interview, the intake throttle valve angle discussed in Iwano does not vary its angle among the cylinders because the throttle valve angle is fixed with respect to the multiple cylinders. That is, the throttle valve does not alter its angle for each individual cylinder and therefore cannot reasonably be interpreted as teaching or suggesting conversion means/unit for converting the intake air amount variations among the cylinders to intake valve operating angle variations among the cylinders and/or intake valve lift amount variations among the cylinders.

It is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-14 and 16-19 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff

Registration No. 27,075

Steven D. Jinks

Registration No. 62,760

JAO:STD/cdk

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OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC

P.O. Box 320850

Alexandria, Virginia 22320-4850

Telephone: (703) 836-6400

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